

Appendix H: Glossary and Acronyms

ACOE – United States Army Corps of Engineers

APCC – Association to Preserve Cape Cod

Aquifer – An underground geologic formation capable of holding large quantities of water. Aquifers may serve as a source of drinking water.

Bacteria – Microscopic one-celled organisms found everywhere. Some bacteria have the potential to be a public health threat. In Massachusetts there are defined limits for a specific bacteria, fecal coliform, in water bodies.

Basin – A topographic designation based on drainage patterns. The water flowing within a basin (or watershed) eventually flows to one common point. The state has been divided into 27 major basins under the Watershed Initiative.

BCDHE – Barnstable County Department of Health and the Environment

BCRDO – Barnstable County Resource Development Office

Best Management Practices (BMPs) – Techniques which may be nonstructural, structural or managerial capable of effectively and economically reducing nonpoint sources of pollution.

Biomonitoring – Examining the biological (living) communities in a given body of water (or other habitat) to determine the complexity, diversity, and species composition in the water body. This information helps assess the overall health of the habitat.

Board of Health (BOH) – In Massachusetts it is the local board responsible for health issues in the community including septic systems.

Buffer – An area of no or limited activity along a water way or wetland functioning as a filter of pollutants contained in runoff, a wildlife corridor and several other benefits.

CCC – Cape Cod Commission

CCCCT – The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts

CCCS – Cape Cod Center for Sustainability

CCNS – Cape Cod National Seashore

CFCC – Community Foundation of Cape Cod

Clean Water Act (CWA) – A federal law establishing comprehensive national policies for water quality management. The essence of the CWA is to have all US waters “fishable and swimmable.”

Conservation Commission (ConComm) – A volunteer board within a Massachusetts community responsible for administering the Wetland Protection Act and the River Protection Act.

CRC – Barnstable County Coastal Resources Committee

CWQM – Citizen Water Quality Monitoring

CZM – Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management

DAR – Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

DCR – Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

DEM – Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management

DEP – Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

DMF – Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

DPW – Department of Public Works

Effluent – Used water as it leaves a treatment system. Examples are discharges from sewage treatment facilities or water used in an industrial cooling system.

EOEA – Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Geographical Information System (GIS) – A relatively new and useful computerized system able to create data layers amenable to transfer onto maps and other useful products for assessing a river basin. Data layer examples include all open space, watershed boundaries, and land use.

Impervious Surface – A surface, which does not allow water to penetrate such as pavement.

Interbasin Transfer – A transfer of drinking water or wastewater from one basin into another. These transfers are regulated by the state (Department of Environment Management). Transfers between basins but within the same town do not require a permit.

MET – Massachusetts Environmental Trust

MWI – Massachusetts Watershed Initiative

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) – A federal program under the Clean Water Act created to monitor point source discharges, such as sewage treatment plant effluent and industrial discharges.

NHESP – Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

Nitrate – A form of nitrogen readily usable by vegetation. Excessive amounts of nitrate can disrupt ecological balances in a natural system. High levels of nitrate in drinking water pose a health threat especially for children (blue baby syndrome).

Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) – Pollution originating from multiple and not easily identifiable sources. Storm water is a significant contributor of nonpoint pollutants since it washes pollutants from impervious surfaces such as roadways.

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

On-site Systems – An individual system for treating wastewater, commonly called a septic system.

PALS – Pond and Lake Stewards Program

Phosphorus – A nutrient often serving as the limit to growth in freshwater systems. Excessive amount of phosphorus in a water body can lead to a condition of unchecked plant growth known as eutrophication.

River Protection Act (RPA) – A newly enacted law creating a 200-foot river resource area around most of the perennial rivers and streams in Massachusetts to better protect the quality of our river resources. The RPA expands the scope of the Wetland Protection Act.

Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) – A federal law passed in 1974 creating a federal program to monitor and increase the safety of drinking water. Amended in 1986 to establish new enforcement responsibilities for EPA and changes in nation-wide safeguards.

SMAST – School of Marine Science Technology, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth

State Revolving Fund (SRF) a fund from which a community can apply for zero interest loans to assess or improve wastewater problems in the community. Scope of the SRF has recently been expanded.

Title 5 – The Massachusetts regulation overseeing on-site wastewater treatment systems. Improperly or poorly functioning on-site systems (Septic Systems) have the potential to adversely impact nearby waterways.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) – The Federal Clean Water Act requires each state to identify waters for which effluent limitations are not stringent enough to meet water quality standards. The TMDL established the allowable pollutant loading from all contributing

sources to achieve water quality standards. TMDLs may also be applied to waters threatened by excessive pollutant loading (i.e. non-point sources).

Tributary – A stream or river flowing into a larger, mainstream river.

USGS – United States Geological Survey

Wastewater – Water, which is used for some purpose, then discarded or “wasted”. Usually refers to the water used in households, business, and industry and containing wastes.

Watershed – An area of land contributing runoff to one common point. Large watersheds may be divided into smaller sub-watersheds.

WBNERR – Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Wetland – Area of land with saturated or nearly saturated soils most of the year and serves as an interface between land-based and water-based environments.

WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, a United States Department of Agriculture cost-share program managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

WIC – Barnstable County Wastewater Implementation Committee

WRP – Massachusetts Wetlands Restoration Program

Glossary created 9/97, DFWELE – Riverways Program. Modified 2002, EOE-Massachusetts Watershed Initiative.